



PAT STRACHOTA

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

SB204

October 4, 2011

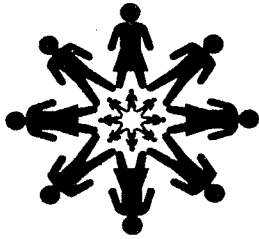
Good afternoon. I would like to thank the chair and members of the Committee for hearing my testimony today.

Finding yourself short of breath or breaking into a rash after eating a certain food or being stung or bitten by an insect is a terrifying situation. Unfortunately, that is exactly what happens to many Americans each and every day. Many of us know someone who has a severe allergy to something, and some of us may have seen this reaction occur or even been the one to experience a allergic reaction.

Anaphylaxis is a serious allergic reaction that can be triggered by food, medication, latex or insect stings. Three million children under the age of eighteen have food allergies, and that number is increasing. These food allergies cause more than 300,000 ambulatory care visits by children each year. Additionally, 20-25% of anaphylactic reactions occur in a child whose allergic condition was unknown by the school at the time of the reaction.

The prescriptive use of an epinephrine auto-injector (epi-pen) has become an accepted and beneficial tool in protecting individuals from serious allergic reactions. The use of "epi-pens" in schools has also become a common method of protecting children against severe reactions they may encounter during school hours. When a reaction occurs, it is vital that the immediate administration of epinephrine occurs. SB204 simply permits the student, while in school or at a school-sponsored activity, to possess and use an "epi-pen" if the student uses the injector to prevent the onset or alleviate the symptoms in an emergency situation.

The bill will require the student to get the written approval of the physician and parent or guardian and provide a copy of the approvals to the school. The bill also says that no public, private or tribal school, employee or school board is civilly liable for any injury incurred by the student who uses or possesses an epinephrine auto-injector.



WASN

Wisconsin Association of School Nurses

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Public Health, Human Services, and Revenue Committee on Senate Bill 204

Ann Riojas, President
Wisconsin Association of School Nurses

October 4, 2011

My name is Ann Riojas. I am a nursing supervisor with the Milwaukee Public Schools and President of the Wisconsin Association of School Nurses (WASN). On behalf of WASN, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding Senate Bill 204, relating to allowing certain pupils to possess and use epinephrine auto-injectors.

WASN is supportive of the Legislature's effort to improve the health and well-being of Wisconsin children. There are, however, some additions we would recommend for this legislation that would make it stronger and more effective. WASN asks that the following specific changes be made to SB 204:

1) Require that the emergency number (911 in most areas) be called when an Epi-pen is used. This is consistent with the requirements in the current school medication law.

Why is this necessary? No one can say what panic-stricken students will do when they are having trouble breathing. They may not have the presence of mind to remember how to give it – assuming they received appropriate training in the first place.

There was a situation where a parent insisted her kindergarten student be allowed to keep his Epi-pen in his backpack lest he have a reaction on the bus. The student took out his Epi-pen on the bus and accidentally injected his hand and then kept the exposed needle in his other hand until he was off the bus, risking needle sticks to the other children and staff.

What if a student has asthma, needs a second dose, and another does is not available? Approximately 20% of all anaphylactic episodes are biphasic, meaning the person will experience another reaction sometime between 20 minutes and 72 hours later.

By all standards, Epi is an "emergency" drug and needs 911 follow-up. Under the

law, anyone, even a bus driver, can administer Epi-pens. It certainly makes sense to call for emergency help when this is done.

WASN simply cannot support this legislation without the 911 language.

2) Make it crystal clear that “approval” means approval to use epinephrine by auto-injector. We suggest the following language for proposed Section (1r)(b) on Page 2 of the bill: “The pupil has the written approval of the pupil’s physician and, if the pupil is a minor, the written approval of the pupil’s parent or guardian to self-administer the epinephrine by auto-injector.” (new language is underlined)

In an ideal world, the physician’s office would provide Epi-pen training. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee this will happen in the real world. I can tell you from my own experience that it often does not happen with inhalers, so why should we assume it will happen with Epi-pens?

One school nurse reported a student allergic to bee stings last year who gave himself his Epi-Pen during cross country practice and kept running. If another student had not witnessed this and reported it, no one would have known, as he did not report it. This could have been catastrophic.

WASN stands ready to work with you on these amendments. Thank you once again for your commitment to improving the health and well-being of Wisconsin school children.

Andre Hermes

Public testimony

10/4/2011

Senate Bill 204 - Senate Committee on Public Health, Human
Services and Revenue

Thank you for letting me be here today. I am Andre Hermes and I go to Hamilton Middle School in Madison. I am allergic to peanuts, cashews and pistachios.

I think being able to carry an Epipen at school would help not only me, but others as well – like those allergic to bee stings.

I think it is safest for me to have an Epipen on me at all times and at the nurse's office at school. I ride the city bus everyday and go to clubs after school. There are times when there is no Epipen with me unless I carry it. Also if I go to a friends house after school I do not have an Epipen with me unless I pack one in my bag.

As I get older, I need to be more independent. That means I need to be safe too. I am a trustworthy person and I have known my whole life how serious an Epipen is. I know it can hurt someone just as much as it can help me. I appreciate you listening. Do you have any questions?